

*Right:* Maj Christopher E. Phelps takes time during the assessment to visit with the local Iraqis.

*Left:* In general, Iraqi children love to be photographed; this little guy was no exception.



*“It wasn’t until I came back this time and...  
talked to the people, walked among the people,  
listened to their problems, that I had a new realization how broken Iraq was.”*

Maj Christopher E. Phelps









*Left and Above:* Team 2, Detachment 2, 5th CAG enroute to conduct an assessment at another water pumping station.





*“That is the key—just meeting more people and talking to more people and just showing them that, ‘hey, we’re here’—and talk to them personally...that we can do things to help you and your community.”*

Sgt Sean C. Lawlor  
Team 3, Detachment 2, 5th CAG

*Facing Page:* The team discusses the conditions of the pumping equipment with the operator.

*“I know that if I can come back here again doing what I’m doing on this tour, I’ll be back here in a minute—because it is something that needs to be done and is something very important to our whole effort.”*

Sgt Sean C. Lawlor

*Facing Page:* A typical reaction to CAG team arrival; incidentally, at the time of this writing, Sgt Sean Lawlor (quoted above), is indeed back in Iraq for yet another tour.







Marines of MTT 2 supervise practical exercises conducted by Iraqi Security Forces following training at the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp.







**A**dvisory Support Teams (ASTs), as they were known in 2005, were small teams of 10 men that lived with, trained, and advised Iraqi Security Forces. Marines assigned to these billets received three weeks of training provided by the Security, Cooperation, Education and Training Center at Quantico, Virginia, followed by three days of training in Iraq conducted by U.S. Army personnel assigned to the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team. Following this training they were sent to various Iraq units and embedded within. Their goal was to facilitate, not direct, the functioning of units to which they were assigned. In this role, they were involved in almost every aspect of unit functioning, from mission planning and execution to administrative and logistics.

By far, the most important element for success, conveyed by countless U.S. advisors, was building personal relationships with their Iraqi counterparts. Relationships ensured their advice would be heeded, and were built around sharing information about families, having *chai* (strong, sweet tea around which all socializing occurs) together and getting to know their counterparts as men, not just warriors. While Marines are usually very “cut-to-the-chase” and business-oriented, that approach would have been disastrous for an AST. The Iraqis need to see that you value them before they



will value you and, more importantly, what you have to say. As one AST member succinctly put it, “one of the first things we had to realize is to quit thinking of them as Iraqis and think of them as people.”

Also working with the Iraqi Security Forces were Military Training Teams (MTTs). MTT 2, in Iraq during 2005, worked mainly with the police forces, while ASTs worked with the military; however, their missions had much in common: preparing Iraqis to provide their own security.



*Right:* 1stLt Patrick J. Keane (center), embedded with the Iraqi Security Forces, visits a checkpoint outside of Fallujah manned jointly by Iraqi personnel and Marines.

*Left:* An Iraqi *jundi* (private) mans a post at a Fallujah checkpoint.











*Above, Right, and following two pages:* Iraqi children, at first very timid, ultimately approach Marines awaiting arrival of Iraqi Security Forces to conduct a search for a reported cache site.